

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Mystic choir**

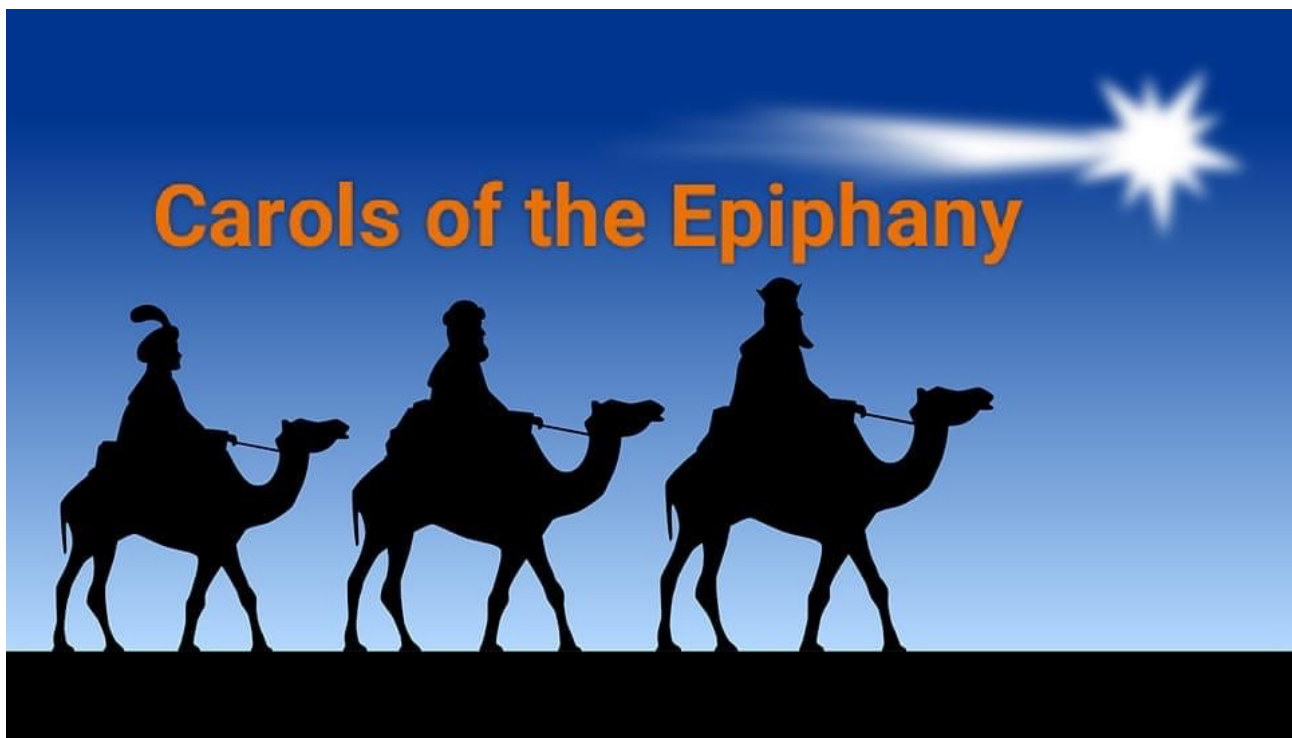
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## Image of the day

### Mystic choir

Not only can the Choir of St Patrick's Cathedral make superb music at the popular carol services... with technology they can process invisibly.

## People and places



## Epiphany Music at St Columb's Cathedral

Christmas celebrations at St Columb's Cathedral, Derry, will conclude with the Cathedral Chamber Choir on Sunday 8th January at 4pm singing Carols of the Epiphany with music by Tavener, Mendelssohn, Cornelius and Crotch, and with



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organ music by Bach, Reger and Telemann. All are welcome.

## Meet me in St Louis for SEEK23



**The Catholic Chaplaincy at Queen's University has decamped to St Louis, Missouri, for the New Year.**

20 students from Queen's have joined 20000 young people from universities and colleges across the US, Ireland, UK, Germany, Austria, and Mexico for SEEK 23.





The annual conference, organised by their friends at FOCUS, gives students a unique opportunity to come together and celebrate their Catholic faith.

“Our hosts’ warm welcome and generous hospitality has gotten our trip off to the best of starts.

“More updates to follow!”



## News reports



### Thousands pay their respects to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

**The body of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has lain in state in St Peter's Basilica, where the faithful paid their final respects and offering prayers.**

The Pope Emeritus' remains were translated from the Monastery Chapel to the Basilica in a private ceremony presided over by Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, Archpriest of St Peter's, on Monday morning (2 January).



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A long line of pilgrims had already formed early in the morning before the viewing officially began at 9am Rome time.

The exposition of the body will continued through to yesterday, Wednesday, with the Basilica open to the faithful from 9am to 7 pm on Monday, and from 7am to 7pm on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Requiem Mass is set to take place Thursday morning in St Peter's Square, beginning at 9.30am Rome time.

The late Pope Emeritus has asked for the funeral and accompanying rites and ceremonies to be marked by simplicity. He will be laid to rest in the Grottoes beneath the Basilica.



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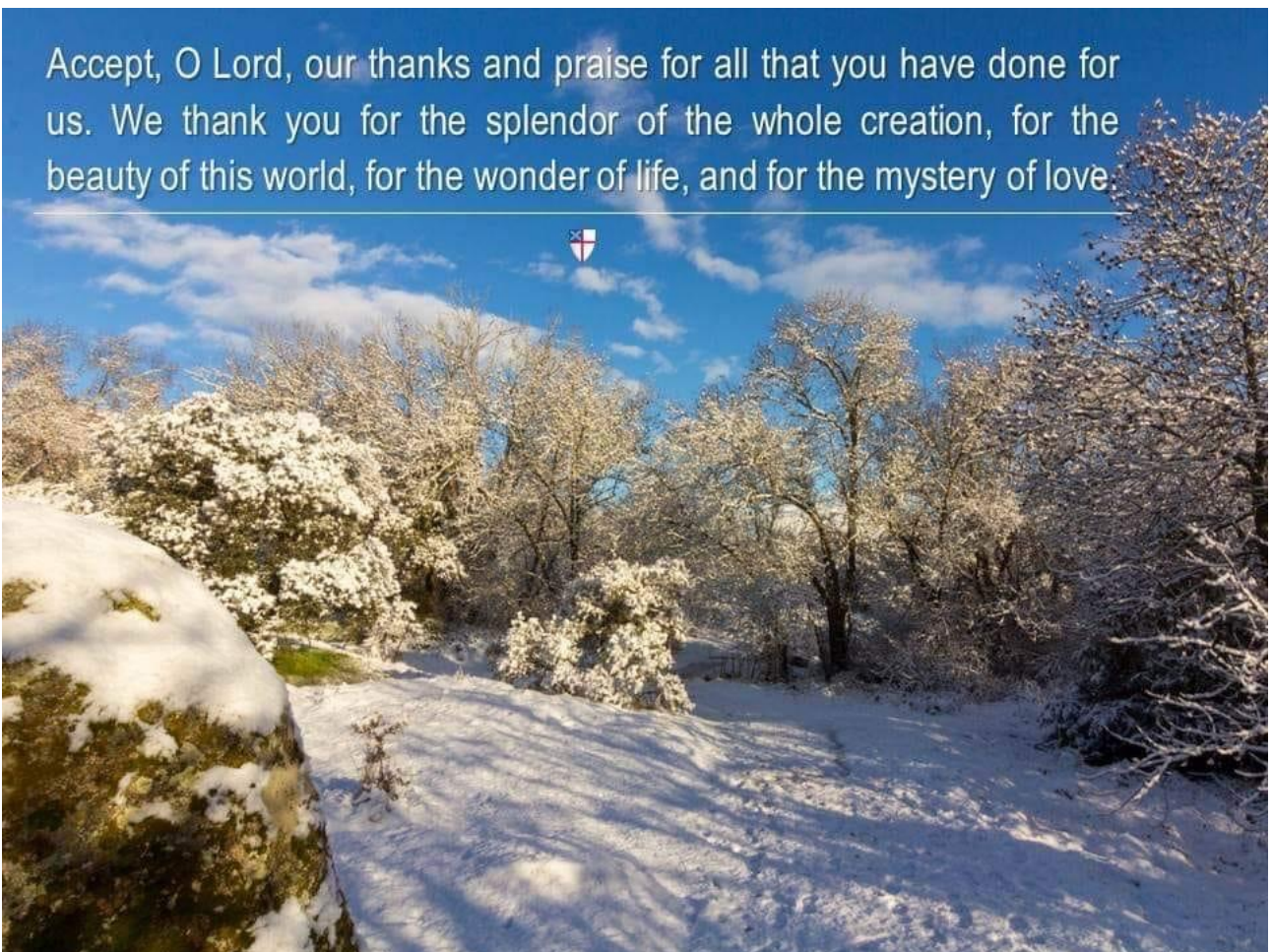
Benedict was pope from 2005 until he resigned in 2013 due to his advancing years. He was the first pope to resign in over 600 years, becoming Pope Emeritus.

He passed away on the morning of New Year's Eve at the age of 95 after his health rapidly declined in the last few days of 2022.

His funeral today will be preceded over by his successor Pope Francis. He will then be laid to rest in the tombs of St Peter's.

The last papal funeral was in April 2005 for Benedict's predecessor, John Paul II.

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.



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Pope Francis paid tribute to his "beloved" predecessor during his New Year's Day Angelus on Sunday.

"Let us all join together, with one heart and one soul, in thanking God for the gift of this faithful servant of the Gospel and of the Church," he said.

You may watch a report on the Vatican Youtube channel: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0vmyUJSAAM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0vmyUJSAAM)

## **Evangelical student ministry UCCF suspends directors**

**Christian student ministry UCCF asks for prayer as national director suspended following 'various allegations'**

UCCF, the body which supports Christian Unions at universities and colleges across the UK, says its suspended two senior members of staff and commenced a formal investigation into "various allegations".

It's unclear what accusations have been made against national director Richard Cunningham and field director Tim Rudge, though they do not relate to matters of sexual misconduct.

The trustees of the charity say they are seeking experts in employment and workplace practices to run the investigation.



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In a statement, they said: "On 22nd December 2022 the Trust Board of UCCF took the decision to commence a formal investigation into various allegations.

"After careful consideration the board concluded it was appropriate and would assist with the integrity of the investigation to suspend two staff members, Richard Cunningham and Tim Rudge, whilst a formal independent investigation is undertaken to establish the facts.

"Our intention is to appoint legal counsel with expertise in employment and workplace practices to run the



**Diocese of Connor – Clerical Officer (part-time)**

The Church of Ireland Diocese of Connor seeks a part-time Clerical Officer as part of a small administrative team, supplementing the work of the diocese.

18 hours per week Tuesday to Thursday (anticipated)

Remuneration & benefits package includes: An annual salary £22,890 - £26,160 pro-rata; an eight per cent pension contribution by the diocese; generous holiday provisions and family friendly policies. Placement on the pay scale will be dependent on experience.

Essential skills required are competency in minute taking and proficient IT skills.

Please apply to [lorraineogilby@connordiocese.org](mailto:lorraineogilby@connordiocese.org) for a full job description and application form.

The closing date for application is 12 noon on January 23 2023. Interviews for shortlisted applicants are planned for January 31 2023.

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investigation. For the avoidance of doubt the allegations do not relate to matters of sexual misconduct.

"Suspension is a normal practice in such circumstances and is not any indication of guilt. It is an important and biblical principle not to prejudge the outcome of any process.

"We will provide a further update once the investigator is appointed and the remit has been formalised. Details of the scope and how the investigation will be run will be provided at that time.

"Please keep the ministry and staff of UCCF in your prayers at this time."

UCCF looks to support students in mission. Its help sees 40,000 young adults attend evangelistic events on campuses every year. Since 1990 over 1 million gospels have been given out by students. UCCF says hundreds of people are coming to faith each year thanks to Christian Unions.

## **'X' on a headstone? You can kiss goodbye to that, says C of E**

**Kisses marked as "x" are too casual and informal to appear on gravestones, a church judge has ruled.**

The decision was made after Robert Hopkins, the commissary general of the diocese of Canterbury, in his role as a judge of the Church of England's Consistory Court, was



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asked to approve a replacement headstone for a grave at St Mary's church, at Great Chart near Ashford in Kent.

The proposed memorial was for Frederick Edward Champion and his wife Doreen Patricia, who were buried in the churchyard in 1972 and 2020, respectively.

Nigel Champion, the couple's son, had asked the Church court to approve a light grey granite memorial which included a pair of carved swans, a dove, a stairway to heaven and an inscription that included a verse of poetry written by his daughter, which ended with an "x", the symbol of a kiss.

However, Susan Varnals, an objector within the church community, challenged the use of the "x" symbol as well as the inclusion of the swans claiming that they were "too big and of no spiritual significance".

Mrs Varnals argued the proposed headstone was "not in keeping with that part of the churchyard at Great Chart where it will be located and this may set a precedent for future headstones with designs that are out of kilter with that section of the churchyard".

In his ruling, the commissary general said that the churchyard features other "headstones featuring pictorial images chosen for their resonance with the deceased rather than their Christian connotations", including one with a similar swan design 65ft away, as well as others featuring a hockey player and musical notes.

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The judge allowed the inclusion of the swans, which were Mrs Champion's favourite birds, but he refused permission for the kiss.

"In my view, it conveys a tone that is loving, but excessively casual and informal," Mr Hopkins wrote. "It befits transitory person-to-person communication, but not a permanent message on consecrated ground that serves future generations as well as the current one."

## In the media

### **Leo Varadkar couldn't keep up the Brexit hatred - Ruth Dudley Edwards in the Daily Telegraph**

**By accepting his errors on the protocol, the Irish PM is adapting to the new realities of Ireland's politics.**

In his second chance as Ireland's Taoiseach, a job he recovered in mid-December, Leo Varadkar has finally indicated that he's learnt from some of his misjudgments the first time around in dealing with the Northern Ireland Protocol. "I'm sure we've all made mistakes in the handling of Brexit," he said this week. "There was no road map, no manual, it wasn't something that we expected would happen and we've all done our best to deal with it."

It's a radical change in tone, given that Varadkar has until now shown a tin ear for unionist concerns and an obsession with pleasing the EU that had him cynically surfing the post-



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Brexit Anglophobic tide. But it would be a mistake to read it as a principled mea culpa. Varadkar is merely adapting to the starkly different shape of Irish politics today.

In 2020, in a joint enterprise to scupper the chances of a Sinn Fein government, which they believed threatened Irish democracy, the two old civil war parties did a deal that replaced Varadkar, the leader of Fine Gael, with Fianna Fail's Micheal Martin for two years, after which they would swap. In his time as Taoiseach, Martin impressed unionists.



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As a historian, he showed understanding and respect, never shouted about Irish unity, and instigated an eminently practical Shared Island initiative that aimed to use the Good Friday Agreement “to enhance co-operation, connection and mutual understanding on the island and engage with all communities and traditions to build consensus around a shared future”.

It was quite the contrast with Varadkar, whom unionists viewed as a shallow member of a metropolitan elite. He and Simon Coveney, his party deputy and minister for foreign affairs, had been focused on the electoral threat from Sinn Fein in 2025, polishing their Irish nationalist credentials and keeping their options open for senior EU jobs in the future. They had made a series of gaffes about Northern Ireland that made unionists feel they were seen as roadkill. Coveney is now safely tucked away in a domestic ministry, with Martin taking his foreign affairs job, but the distrust for Varadkar had not gone away.

It would seem now, though, that the penny has dropped in Irish official circles that disdaining unionists always puts them into “No surrender” mode. What’s more, the electoral threat posed by Sinn Fein has changed. They are desperate to capture the centre ground and have taken on board the opinion polls that show the Irish public is preoccupied with housing and the cost of living and doesn’t care about Northern Ireland. They are also plagued by embarrassing links to notorious criminals and so are majoring on appearing respectable.

They are still the same subversive party, but for now their rhetoric is about dialogue and trust. So Varadkar, with a



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supportive deputy prime minister and a muzzled Coveney, has the political room to be conciliatory.

There are also the positives from the removal of Boris Johnson (whom the Irish government distrusted) and Liz Truss (whom they feared), and their replacement by Rishi Sunak, who is an unknown quantity whom so far no one dislikes. Rather than insisting on the removal of the protocol, meanwhile, the DUP is talking of “replacing it with arrangements that unionists can support and thus restore genuine power-sharing”. Breathing heavily in the background is Joe Biden, who wants to be in Ireland in April to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, but won’t be if the protocol problems have not been resolved. He has despatched American royalty to Northern Ireland in the shape of Joseph Kennedy III, as a special envoy. The EU, which is now deeply dependent on the US, is also using placatory language. Gradually, the mood music is shifting: it is being recognised that the protocol is about practicalities rather than principle and therefore resolvable by politicians.

Varadkar accepts that Brexit is a reality. He has listed his red lines as avoiding a hard border on the island, and making sure that human rights in Northern Ireland are upheld and the European single market is protected. “The backstop, the protocol, were just mechanisms to achieve those objectives and, so long as we can achieve them, I’ll be as flexible and reasonable as I can be,” he says. Varadkar wants to be standing beside Biden in April in front of a global audience. It’s all to play for.

Daily Telegraph 04/01/2023

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# Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books



## Cambridge Choral Academy's Summer School

**If you're looking for opportunities to develop your voice in 2023, why not join Cambridge Choral Academy's Summer School, 29 July - 5 August...**

... staying in historic St Catharine's College, singing glorious liturgical music in iconic College chapels, with daily vocal health sessions, an exclusive viewing of the Caius Choirbook manuscript, singing in punts on the river, and



dining in College halls steeped history. It's a chance to experience Cambridge's rich choral life from the inside, with warm camaraderie and a friendly welcome! We currently have an Early Bird offer: save 10% until Candlemas, 2 February.

<https://cambridgechoral.com/summer-course/>

## Poem for today

### Looking for a Sunset Bird in Winter by Robert Frost

The west was getting out of gold,  
The breath of air had died of cold,  
When shoeing home across the white,  
I thought I saw a bird alight.

In summer when I passed the place  
I had to stop and lift my face;  
A bird with an angelic gift  
Was singing in it sweet and swift.



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No bird was singing in it now.  
A single leaf was on a bough,  
And that was all there was to see  
In going twice around the tree.

From my advantage on a hill  
I judged that such a crystal chill  
Was only adding frost to snow  
As gilt to gold that wouldn't show.

A brush had left a crooked stroke  
Of what was either cloud or smoke  
From north to south across the blue;  
A piercing little star was through.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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# Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at [houstonmckelvey@mac.com](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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